appliances consuming energy or in production and supply of energy; enforcing a scheme for energy labelling and mandating energy audits for designated consum ers, the Central Government is considering proposing an enactment for energy conservation which would, *inter-alia,* provide for an agency to perform such functions.

Loan facilities for States by NHPC

1335. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Hydel Power Corporation is providing loan facilities to some States;

(b) if so, the main purpose thereof;

(c) the details of loans outstanding against these beneficiary States as on March, 1997; and

(d) the steps taken by the National Hydel Power Corporation for the recovery of such loans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Rationalisation of Power Tariffs

1336. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Electricity Boards and Undertakings have been asked to rationalise and raise power tariffs with a view to raise resources enough to provide for 40 thousand Megawatt additional power capacity during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether it is a fact that while some of the Electricity Boards and authorities have already increased the tariffs recently considerably, while others are announcing and implementing populist schemes including free distribution of power to different sections of society; and

(c) the steps being taken to rationalise the tariff structure in such a way so as to bring about some measures of equity and uniformity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power (CMNPP), finalised in the meetings of Chief Ministers held on 16th October and 3rd December, 1996, *inter-alia,* has recommended that determination of retail tariffs including wheeling charges etc. will be decided by State Electricity Regulatory Commission, which will ensure a minimum overall 3% rate of return to each utility with immediate effect. The Ninth Five Year Plan is under finalisation by the Planning Commission.

(b) During the year 1996-97, State Electricity Boards of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Meghalaya and Electricity De partment of Goa have carried put upward revision in the tariff. The free electricity to Agriculture Sector is being supplied to Tamil Nadu. Some State Governments also declare, from time to time free/ concessional agricultural tariff to small farmers using 5 HP pump sets.

(c) As per the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, State Electricity Boards/State Governments are empowered to fix the electricity tariff. During the Chief Minis ters Conference it was also agreed that the tariff for agricultural sector will not be less than 50 paise/kwh to be brought to 50% of the average cost in not more than 3 years.